/118 cont'd/

648 by influential Li leaders. Hence, even at the present time, almost without exception all Miao land is rented from the Li (a small part also belongs to Chinese merchants who have made their for-
648 tunes in the Li area). From the economic point of view, there-
#66 fore, the relationship between the Li and the Miao has been the relationship between landlords and tenants. The Miao have to pay a certain amount of annual rent to the Li leaders (landlords); sometimes they even have to contribute personal service without compensation. They have to make a contribution toward running the Li schools and t'uans equal to that of the Li participants, but they are not allowed to participate in their administration. Moreover, the ownership of the land belongs to the Li, who can take the land back from their Miao tenants at any time should the latter
648 be disobedient. /119/ During last year's call to "develop Hainan," many shrewd Li leaders declared that they would take the mountain lands back from the Miao to cultivate themselves. Some also took forest preservation as a pretext and forbade the Miao to burn the mountains. When this news reached the Miao community, they were scared to death and did not know what to do about it. Among these unreasonable arrangements, the most cruel one is that the mountains are rented to the Miao tenants, but they are forbidden to enjoy any of the mountain products other than the crops that they
[a22] cultivate. Some Miao pick some of the mountain products, such as edible fungus from trees and rattan, which they may bring out to barter with the Chinese. If they are caught on the way to market by the Li, all the commodities they carry with them are usually confiscated, and in addition they are heavily fined. Commodities subject to confiscation even include the animal skins which the Miao might have hunted in the mountains. Under such circumstances, the Li leaders and the Chinese landlord-merchants usually cooperate because their interests are identical. When I was in the Li area, I personally saw how these /Chinese/ merchants expressed their anti-Miao feeling. One can imagine how hard Miao life is. When I had just arrived in the Miao area, they all approached me with countless complaints about how they were badly treated by other peoples and how hard their livelihood was. They begged me